
When I am Weak...HE is Strong!

Sunday School Lesson 2 Corinthians 12:2-10

How can something be made strong because it's weak? Only through the power of God! This simple Sunday School lesson focuses on a beautiful passage of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Students will consider what it means to face challenges that they might not be able to conquer on their own power. They will appreciate the strength that comes through relying on God's grace first and foremost.



Lesson focus: This lesson emphasizes where true power comes from. We might try to be confident in our own abilities, and often fall flat. We need God for anything and everything that we do. Sometimes we face challenges and feel weak, and that's okay! The message here is that God is always present and wants to help us when we encounter difficulties. His power gives us strength, and that shines through brightest when we are struggling. We lean on God and know we can do great things through Him. His grace is all we need!

Passage: 2 Corinthians 12:5-10; also reference the story of Samson (Judges 14-16) and other events in the life of Paul.

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade (adaptable, but some concepts might be best for slightly older students)

- Watch the [video demonstration](#) of this children's sermon and related [craft ideas](#)

Materials Needed: Construction paper, scissors, decorations, glue, string, hole punch, paper towel tubes, small paper plates, popsicle sticks, markers, crayons, Bible (optional, depending on crafts and activities of choice).

Activities to Introduce the Lesson

Lesson Opening: The focus of this lesson is God's power and strength, which are especially evident in the midst of our weakness and struggles. Consider opening with an activity that highlights our need for help from stronger sources.

Here are some activities to get kids thinking... (select the best ones for your audience and age group):

- Who's on your side tug-of-war: match students up for a "tug-of-war" battle with (smooth!) ropes or jump ropes. Place smaller, younger students up against bigger, tougher ones, and ask the kids who they think will win in such a challenge. It might appear as though the bigger students will be obvious winners—until you place an adult or two on the side of the younger ones! Sometimes it feels that we are up against impossible odds, too, until we remember that God is on our side.
- How strong are you? Provide simple strength challenges for students. See how much they can lift using just one arm, and then two arms...then allow them to work in teams to observe how much more they can carry with help.
- Hold a fun "rock, paper, scissors" tournament for a simple way to open up the topic.
- What's your weakness? Test boundaries of balance by lining students up in pairs along a line. Invite them to attempt to make their partner step away from the line, by pressing against one another's index fingers. Provide guidelines for safety. It's more challenging than it sounds!
- Strength isn't just muscles...challenge students to other "power tests" based on things like memorization, wit, and artistic creativity.

Explain to students that there are many ways we can be strong. Sometimes we think of strength in terms of physical power or stature, but there's so much more than that! We might feel weak or inadequate if we measure success only by what we can do or by what we accomplish on our own. Fortunately, our true power comes from God alone. We are going to talk about what that means, and how we can actually be even stronger when we admit that we are weak!

Ask: What are some things that are challenging for you? When do you feel like you're not strong enough or good enough?

Sunday School Lesson (2 Corinthians 12:2-10) He is Strong

Bible Lesson: The quoted passage in this lesson is relatively short, but there are a few background suggestions to provide, as well. For the reference to the Samson story, see Judges 14-16. Details of Paul's life can be found throughout the book of Acts, beginning in chapter 9, as well as references in his own epistles.

Begin the Bible portion of this lesson by providing an example of someone who will serve as a contrast to the main emphasis of the 2 Corinthians passage: Samson. Depending on your time and audience, you may wish to only briefly discuss the story of Samson...or you can have fun acting out the events in detail. Use puppets or students to bring the story to life.

When discussing Samson, point out how Samson's strength was given to him by God. Unfortunately, he lost track of that and didn't always rely on God as he should have. He gave in to other people, which was part of his downfall. Samson wasn't strong because he worked out every day, but because God gave him power. Use this story to remind kids that we shouldn't brag about our own abilities. It's fine to be confident, but pride can lead to trouble.

Lead into the epistle passage by reviewing some details of Paul's life. Depending on familiarity, you may need to quickly recap who Paul was and how he got his start. Paul had been a Jew, intent on following the law, boastful of his heritage, and bent on persecuting Christians. God humbled him and revealed to him how important it was to rely on Jesus and on grace alone. Paul wrote letters to churches that he worked with, encouraging them in their faith and reminding them (and us, reading them centuries later) of important truths about God. One of these letters, to the Corinthian church, spoke of how Paul recognized where strength comes from: only from above.

On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses— 6 though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. -2 Corinthians 12:5-6

Paul writes here of boasting, and how he will keep from bragging. He had done a lot of things and suffered through a lot of things in his life, but he stays away from writing about himself. Instead, he wants to highlight who Jesus is. He wants the people reading his letter to know that he relies on God. Why would someone boast of weaknesses, though?

Ask: Do we try to hide our weaknesses? Is it ever embarrassing to admit we can't do things?

Explain that Paul had a solid reputation before giving his life to Christ. But he always thought that nothing compared with knowing Jesus and proclaiming the Gospel. Still, Paul never thought too highly of himself, and admitted that God had kept him humble through a challenge that he faced:

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. -2 Corinthians 12:7

This puts a new spin on hardship. Usually we want difficult and painful things to leave us instantly, and with good reason. It's no fun to feel uncomfortable! But Paul recognizes that this trial, whatever it was (we aren't sure specifics), was actually something God used to force Paul to rely on faith for strength...

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. -2 Corinthians 12:8-9

Paul begged God to take away this challenge. But the Lord told him that his "grace was sufficient." What might that mean? Well, sometimes (often times) life is hard and uncomfortable. We are not promised that we'll get all we want this side of Heaven. But we do know we have been given grace, and that the blood of Jesus has saved us and cleansed us. That is enough. Does it feel like enough when facing tough times? It might not...but those are circumstances when we are forced to lean on God all the more. It shouldn't take difficulty to make us realize we need Him and rely on Him, but sometimes that's what it takes. When we recognize that we can't do things on our own power and we need God, it allows God to truly work in and through us in amazing ways.

Ask: Have you ever asked God for something that you didn't get? Does God still hear our prayers if we don't get what we ask for?

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. -2 Corinthians 12:10

Paul went through a lot in his life, but he clung to the hope of Jesus. He knew that God would always be present and would help him no matter what. The same is true for us! There are many things we encounter that seem (and sometimes are) impossible. We can't do all things on our own...but we can do all things through Christ. Even if life doesn't go how we wish, we know that He is present and with us.

When we realize we are weak, we know we need the help of others. We always need God's help, and He will always provide it!

Ask: How can you remember this beautiful promise? How can you apply it?

When we are feeling weak, or discouraged, or uncertain, we can pray and ask God for strength and power. Recognize that all we have and can do comes from Him and returns to Him. It's okay if we can't do everything...we shouldn't be able to do without God's help! What a comforting blessing it is to know He is with us and that His grace is enough for us.

Close with a prayer thanking God for His power and strength. Ask for help in trusting God for all things, and thank Him for making us strong when we feel weak. Thank God for His grace and ask for help in relying on that for comfort.

Sunday School Craft Ideas

Crafts: Use your creativity to select crafts that remind students of God's strength and our need to rely on Him. A few possible crafts to consider include:

- "Soft made strong" cross with yarn or string surrounding a firmer cross shape to illustrate how weak things can become strong with Jesus.
- A "power in weakness bar bell" to identify methods of trusting in God above all else.
- "God's Power is greatest trophy" or medal to recall that our strength comes from Him.
- Long-haired Samson puppet with muscle arms.

We recognize that life is full of challenges, and that we are not always capable of doing what we would like to do. The blessed message of this passage is that God's strength shines through when we are weak! Highlighting 2 Corinthians 12, wherein Paul describes his struggle with an unrelieved challenge, these crafts remind children that our weaknesses can help us rely on God all the more. A cross wrapped in soft yarn or fabric illustrates how simple or soft things can be made firm and strong in Christ. A barbell-shaped craft considers how God holds us up and strengthens us, even when we struggle.

Verses or Captions to Consider... (Main Text: 2 Corinthians 12:2-10)

- *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. -2 Corinthians 12:9*
- *10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. -2 Corinthians 12:10*
- *On my own I am weak...through CHRIST I can do all things!*
- *I am weak but HE is strong.*
- *I can be strong by.... (Prayer, Scripture, Faith)*

Craft one: “Soft Made Strong” Cross

You will need:

- Cross (or popsicle stick cross)
- Yarn or string
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Other decorations (jewels, stickers, etc.)

Procedure:

1. Create a verse and caption to attach to the final product.
2. Make a cross out of popsicle sticks or have a prepared cross.
3. Carefully wind soft string, yarn, or ribbon around the cross, covering it as much as you prefer, to create something that is firm, even though made from weak and flimsy materials.
4. Hang your cross and caption to remember that Jesus makes us strong!



Craft Two: “How He Makes Me Strong Barbell”

You will need:

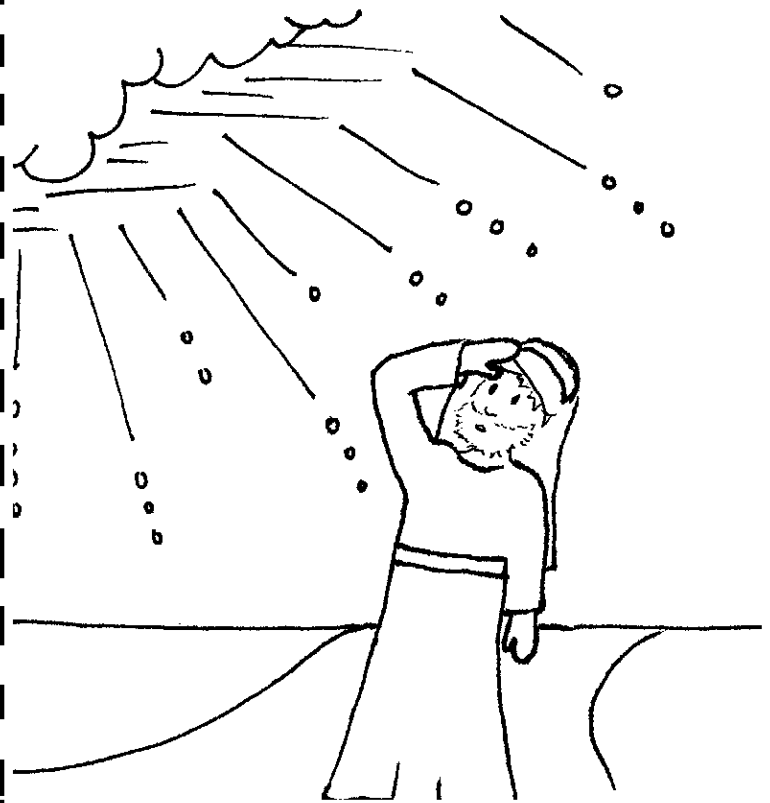
- Paper towel tube
- Aluminum foil
- Stickers/decorations
- Markers/crayons
- String or ribbon (optional)
- Glue or tape
- Construction paper/cardstock
- Scissors
- Captions/verses



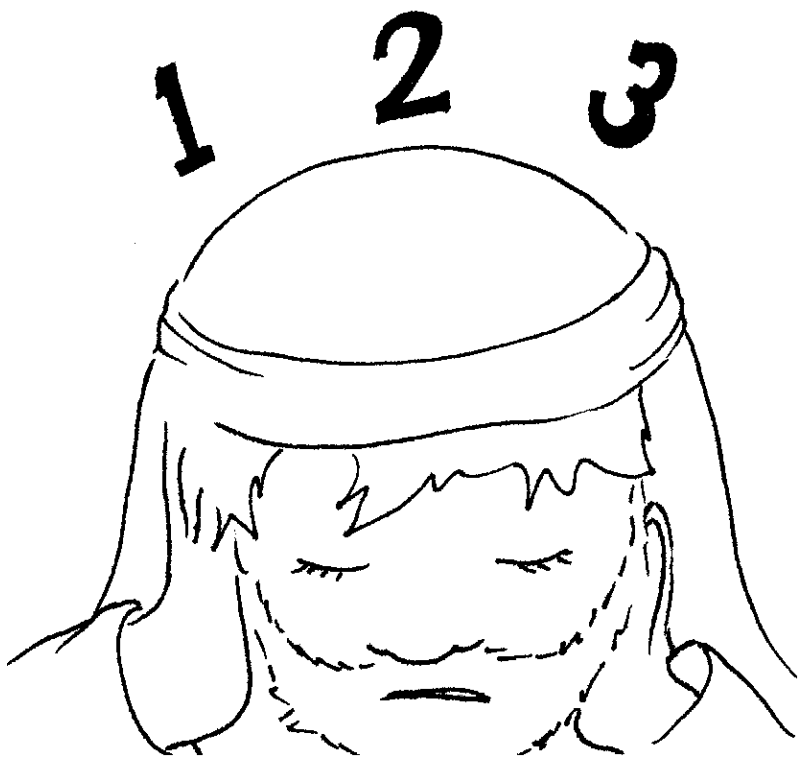
Procedure:

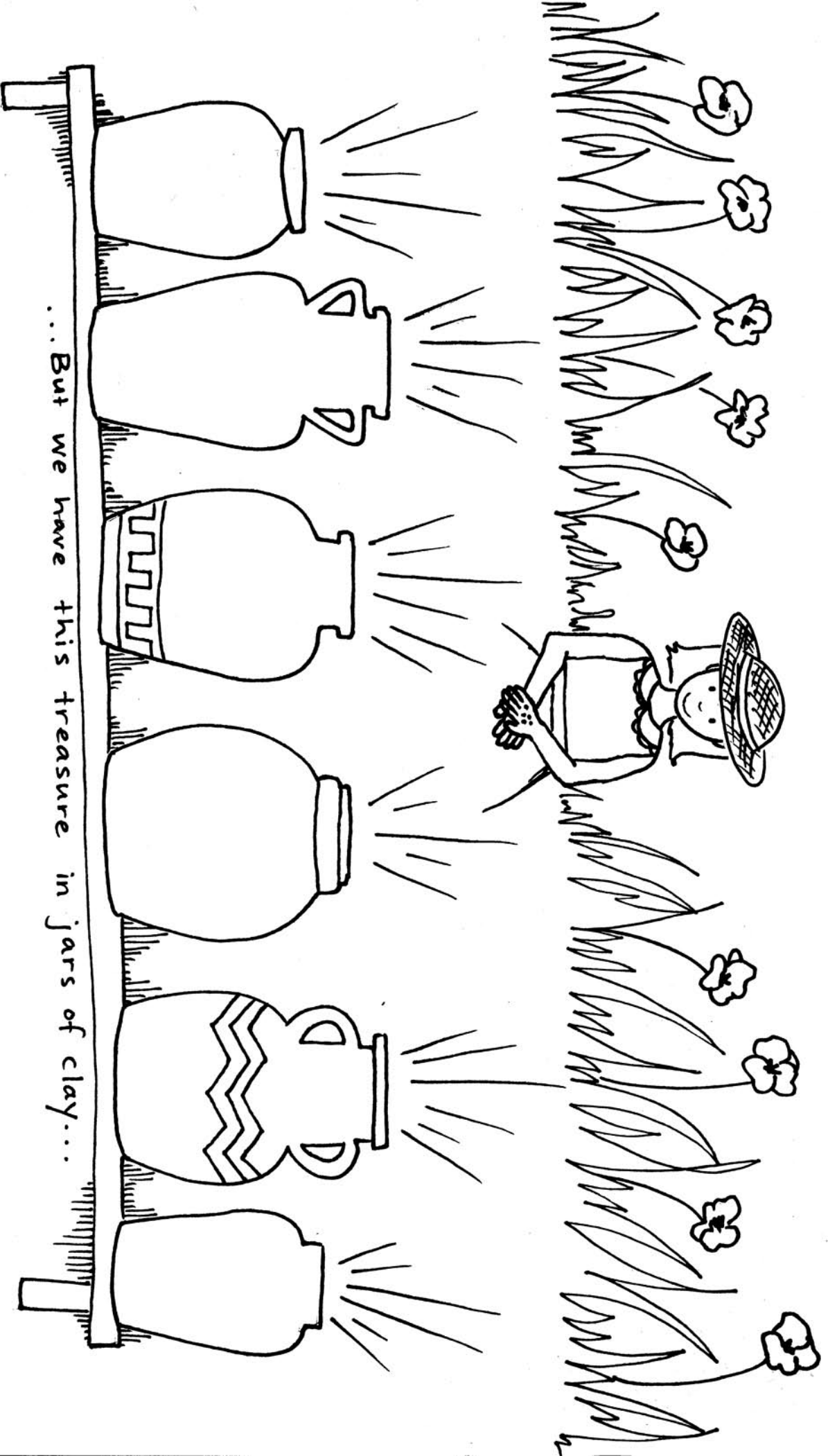
1. Cover the paper towel tube in aluminum foil (optional to create metal effect).
2. Cut out donut-like circles (with a hole in the center) out of cardstock or paper plates.
3. Write verse references or captions and add the “weight plates” to the tube by sliding them onto the ends of each side.
4. Use string to attach additional captions with suggestions of how we can grow stronger in the Lord and in our faith.
5. Attach extra decorations if desired, and remember that we are strong because of Christ!





the Conversion of Paul...





2 CORINTHIANS

Power in Weakness

God Gives Us Strength

Children's Message (2 Corinthians 12:2-10)

Children might not have traumatic struggles and challenges to face in their lives (hopefully!), but they can certainly relate to the concept of weakness. There are a lot of things that are difficult or impossible for kids to do on their own, and they recognize that they need help from others to accomplish

daily tasks. In the same way, we know we rely on God for all that we do in our lives. This message reminds students that we need God's help, and that our weaknesses only make His power more apparent.

Law/Gospel Theme: Keeping rules perfectly can be daunting and seem impossible, and on our own it is impossible to maintain the law. In fact, we can do nothing on our own. Facing difficulties and challenges is discouraging, but we have the comfort of knowing that God is with us. He might not remove obstacles the way we would prefer, and we might feel tremendously incapable. But we recognize that Jesus has provided all we need, and that He promises to be with us and help us through the challenges we face. God is on our side, and will help us no matter what! God's grace is sufficient for us, and His power is made perfect in our weakness.

Optional Materials: Something heavy or challenging to do alone.

Bible Passage: 2 Corinthians 12:2-10

More Teaching Ideas:

- Watch the [video demonstration](#) of this children's sermon and related [craft ideas](#)
- Download the complete [Sunday School Lesson from 2 Corinthians 12:2-10](#)

Message: Note: As with most messages, the details of how you choose to communicate this are adaptable and should cater to timing as well as to your audience and student needs. Use your judgment and ideas to best serve students.



Power in Weakness 2 Corinthians 12:2-10 Children's Sermon

Greet the children, with something that is heavy or tough to manage...

Hello, children of God! Have you ever had a big, important task to tackle? I sure have. In fact, I wanted to show off my skills right now, because I have this big box I need to move (*or insert other task that needs handled*). I am big and strong, though, so I should have no problem carrying it from one side of the room to the other. Just give me a minute and I'll take care of this! *Attempt to lift/move the box, but have an obviously hard time doing so. Give it a few tries.*

Hmm.... You know what, I think I have to admit something here. This is too hard for me to do on my own. I just don't think I can lift this box all by myself! Do you think maybe you could help me out? Come on up! *Allow several students to assist you in moving/carrying the object.* Phew! Thank you for your help! Wow, that was much easier with help. And you know what else? Your strength really showed through. Because I couldn't do this on my own, I needed your strong muscle power to help! Sometimes it's difficult to admit that we need help or can't do things all by ourselves. But God created us to need one another...and even more importantly, He made us to rely on *Him*.

There will be times when we feel like we are weak, not good enough, maybe even powerless. But God wants us to know that He is enough for us. It's okay if we can't do everything on our own, because God's strength helps us! The apostle Paul talked about this in 2 Corinthians. Paul was an amazing man of God who wrote a lot of the New Testament. But there was something in his life that was a big challenge. We aren't quite sure exactly what it was. It might have been an illness or physical impairment of some sort, or maybe something mental...whatever bothered him, Paul tried to ask God to take it away. He prayed and prayed that God would remove the problem, but He didn't. Paul still had what he called this "thorn in his flesh." There was a reason for this, though. God wanted Paul to remember the source of his strength. Paul finally accepted that his problem was not going to go away, and that it would be okay. He realized that God's grace was enough. He knew that he needed to fully depend on God, and that His power would show up even more because of Paul's problems and weaknesses.

So what about us? We already recognize that we need God for all things. We can't do much of anything at all on our own strength and power! There will be times in our lives that we feel frustrated, challenged, or inadequate. Those are the moments when we need to remember that God is still with us. God's grace is all we need. That can be hard to remember or to fully embrace, but it's true. If we have

Jesus, we have everything. Without Him, nothing is possible. With Christ, we can do all things! God promises to provide us with strength and power to do whatever He wills. When we are weak or struggling, He is even stronger. Lean on God for all things!

Let's say a prayer to thank God for taking care of us, and ask Him to help us trust in His power and strength for all we do:

Prayer:

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for being strong and powerful

On my own, I am weak

But with you I can do all things

Help me to trust in you always

And recognize that I need you for everything

Thank you for your love

I love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

Bible Verses/story to Reference:

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. 3 And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. 5 On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses— 6 though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. 7 So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. -2 Corinthians 12:2-10



Thank you for downloading these free materials. Our team is grateful for your trust and pray that God will bless your ministry.

This resource was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#) (pictured right). She serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.



Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

My name is Tony Kummer (pictured below). I started Ministry-To-Children.com in 2007 as a free resource for anyone sharing Jesus with kids. It is my personal honor to share these resources with churches around the world.



[Reader donations](#) and your support at [The Sunday School Store](#) fund these free materials. Please keep us in mind when you are choosing your next children's ministry curriculum.

If you enjoy our material, be sure to [sign-up for my free email newsletter](#) called "Sunday School Works!" Every Tuesday, I send the latest new lessons, crafts, and coloring pages in print-friendly format to make your lesson planning easy.

May God continue to bless your ministry!

Tony Kummer